

Town of Northport
Climate Resilience Committee
Jan 16, 2025, 10:00, NVCO
Minutes

PRESENT: Tinsley Morrison, Celine Bewsher, Gianluca Yornet de Rosas (from Center for Ecology-based Economy), Susan Conard, John Kreuger, Molly Schaufli. (Gordon not there due to leg injury).

NEXT MEETING: Thurs Feb 13, 11:00 am

Actions/next steps:

- Sue will contact James about how to have the Town pay \$50 dues to WCCAC.
 - Celine will inquire with FB Environmental in Portland to see what a town-wide stormwater management plan entails.
 - Talk with Amon and Bill after that to see what their specific stormwater concerns are.
 - Gianluca offered to let us know of any other rural towns that are or have undertaken a townwide stormwater management plan.
 - Put us all on a map and see if there is a big area we are missing.
 - To discuss next time: what parts/or groups of Northport would benefit from more representation; Bring the map to our next meeting; Vulnerability assessment, Next grant from CRP?, set date for another town meeting, update on town hall. communicating value of new town hall: gathering place, emergency shelter, etc.
-

Minutes 1/16/25

(Note: our last full meeting was in October; no meeting in Nov, and Dec meeting was postponed due to IT issues. Prior to this meeting several suggested we need to redevelop more focus.

1. **Discussion re: our collective response to Gianluca's survey** about where we are, what our challenges have been, where we were headed. The survey is to help him write a guide for towns starting climate resilience committees, and we decided it was a good way to help us refocus.

Question 1: What inspired establishment of Committee?

- The CRC first convened in fall, 2023.
- It arose out of our first community workshop (June 2023) to discuss issues/problems re: vulnerabilities to climate change, and also from responses to an online community survey, both undertaken as a

requirement for Northport to join the Community Resilience Partnership—necessary to apply for grants.

- The other inspiration was to help inform energy efficiency in our new town office.
- Tinsley has been chair; now we are sharing that responsibility.
- In our first year we focused on community energy assessments (John) and shoreline stabilization grants (Celine). This group has been important in broadening awareness to the whole community and soliciting public engagement. A second community workshop (2024) had much broader representation than the initial one. Enables more unity in the broad Northport community over climate/energy related issues.

Question 2: What have been the committee's key accomplishments, and which project or achievement are you most proud of?

- Bringing community together again in June 2024
- Mapped culverts and hazards from public input. Being used by MDoT. Map was also a way of communicating with community and gathering more information.
- James and Celine have been working hard to secure shoreline stabilization funds. Difficult because not considered a “working waterfront” —though there are some lobster boats! Also emphasis on nature-based solutions conflicts with need for rip-rap in some areas (Celine and others).
- Working with other communities through WCCAC (e.g program for heat pumps for trailers (John).
- Assessment of energy use and energy needs of town buildings (Sue).
- Looking for opportunities to support green energy transition. Working with Town to minimize carbon use by the new town office, and make sure it addresses emergency needs of community. We participated in a public meeting to share initial plans for the new building with townspeople.
- The meeting we held in June brought up again issues of concern from community members, surprising how much of that was focused on issues like natural resource management, such as forest health, wildfires and invasives (brought up in nearly every group (Sue). Getting that community input was an important accomplishment (Celine).
- We re-vitalized our membership of Maine Power Options and negotiated a new electricity contract -- saving the town money. MPO also provides information on decarbonizing options and energy tracking.
- Are there other things we should be focusing on?

Gianluca—more about WCCAC?

- It is a group of Waldo County organizations that exchanges information related to climate change adaptation/mitigation. Expands the reach of the initial Library All of Belfast Climate Dialog (ABCD) group and the Belfast Climate Committee, which focused just on Belfast. People felt it would be valuable for interested orgs in Waldo Co. to get together to exchange info and potentially collaborate on outreach and actions. WCCAC questions: How to balance information exchange and action? How much the group will get involved in certain issues? -- still open questions. Education may be one focus.
- For us, it helps with understanding what other groups are doing in our broader community.

Question 3: What challenges have you faced in driving change through the committee, and how have you addressed them?

- Northport doesn't fit all the categories well for grant availability -- ours doesn't meet the definition of a "working" waterfront; it is recreational, but still economically important (Tinsley).
- We have diverse communities: a large summer community and a significant year-round rural community (John).
- Funding challenge, how to pay for projects.
- Figuring out who we are as a committee, how we function, how we focus? Focus is easy when there is a specific task, e.g. planning a community workshop. Committee leadership is currently shared. Individuals on the committee focus on aspects they are most passionate about.
- How do we take what we learn from public meetings forward? How to communicate with townspeople? The Town Newsletter enables communication to the rest of the town.

Question 4: What are your future plans and goals for the committee?

- We know both shoreline stabilization and stormwater are big issues but we have a lot of questions and need input from an engineer to write a funding proposal — a bit of a catch-22 (Celine). The committee has a budget (\$10k). What would it cost for a townwide stormwater management plan? Can we get preliminary advice from an engineering firm? (Molly). Would an engineer work with Amon and Bill on culvert and drainage issues? Have other small rural towns developed stormwater management plans? Gianluca: there may be someone doing that – I can look into it. Work through CRP? We have identified specific problem areas based on citizen input, noted on our map – we need expertise from hydrologist/engineer.

- We (Town Administrator) continue work with County on Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Our next goals are what we need to discuss this winter.

Question 5: What valuable lessons or advice would you share with a group interested in starting their own climate committee?

- Climate resilience is a huge, never-ending task; it is a challenge to not get overwhelmed. Try to focus on discrete, manageable goals/outcomes.
- Get the town involved and keep the town involved. The community workshops have been valuable. Everyone gets to have a voice.
- Our group has a variety of backgrounds and interests that complement each other pretty well.
- One thing we might be missing is more “geographic” diversity in Northport (Celine). Greatest participation so far has been residents in Northport’s coastal communities. (where the greatest population density is). ACTION: Put us all on a map and see if there is a big area we are missing.
- Ability to be flexible; focus on what we are most passionate about (Molly).